

## **'Haverhill Historian'**

### Extracts:

- **'The Shant at Horseheath'** *by Patrick Crouch and Jane Harwood, 1987*

Photographs by courtesy of Peggy Notley  
Press cutting by courtesy of Cambridge Evening News,  
1989

- **'Shocking Discovery in East Cambs'**  
*by Jane Harwood, 1987*

## THE SHANT, HORSEHEATH

During the construction of Haverhill's two railway lines, a lot of buildings of an insubstantial nature would have been 'run up'. These were for the occupation of the thousands of navies who were needed to dig out the cuttings, make the embankments and construct the bridge and stations of the lines. Virtually all have gone. But one that does remain is a small bungalow by the remains of the railway at Horseheath. This was built as a beerhouse where the navies, who were digging the deepest cutting on the line, could slake their thirst. Originally it was a four room structure built with a timber frame with the studs wide apart and the spaces filled with brick. Later an extra skin of brick appears to have been constructed around the outside. (But not behind the rear extension which would appear to predate this brickwork).

Luckily the deeds of this building survive and with the kind permission of the present owner, Major Burles and his wife, we are able to relate its history.

The lands that it stands on appeared to be part of a parcel of land that was allotted to Samuel Webb of West Wickham, "...as his forth part or share". This sounds like the enclosure of common land. By 1804 the land passed to Samuel's wife and by 1831 to his son also Samuel. This Samuel sold it for the token amount of 10/- (50p) to his son Jonas who died in 1862, just at the time the railway was starting to be built. Half the parcel of land was wanted by the Great Eastern Railway Company, but this left a small area of about 2 rods 24 perches. This Jonas Webb's executors sold to John Paxton for £45. He is described as a beerhousekeeper of Horseheath, so he may have already erected the building.

He no doubt did well while the cutting was being dug but by 1865 the line was finished and on the 24th of June 1867 he sold the beerhouse for £100 to John Price of Kedington, who added it to the pubs belonging to his Kedington Brewery.

We are able to see who was living at the pub at the time of the 1871 and 1881 census. It is referred to as the 'Shant' presumably a derivation of shanty meaning poor, mean - a small timber hut or shed. In 1871 Philip Carter was 'head', he was 57 and described as a beer-seller. His wife Elizabeth was 52 and living with them were three people. One is described as Elizabeth's mother, Sophia Lucas, but she is only 65. Her granddaughter Elizabeth Auger, 21, is also recorded as is a visitor Robert Lucas, 7. Ten years later the first four are still there. Philip now described as a publican and agricultural labourer is still head. His wife is now 63 and her mother Elizabeth Ager is 75. The granddaughter is unmarried and the fifth person is another child visitor Eliza Rowlinson described as a scholar.

In 1883 the Kedington Brewery with its pubs were put up for auction and were bought by a South London brewer Thomas Jenner. In the sales particulars the Shant is described as "...an off licenced beer house, brick built and tiled containing three rooms and cellar." There was a garden of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre and the whole was let to Elijah Pask. Jenner had great plans for the brewery and started to instal some modern machinery. However things did not seem to turn out as he expected for within four years he had sold all the pubs to Greene King and Son of Bury St. Edmunds. The brewery was auctioned off in October 1887 as a "freehold factory" with a covenant that it was not to be used for brewing. This building was to become the Eastern Counties Bacon Factory and very little of it now survives.

Greene King kept the Shant as one of their pubs till 1899 when they sold it to William Pannal of Haverhill, baker for £25. It was sold as a private house and Pannal had to agree to a covenant forbidding him to sell intoxicating liquor on or off the premises. Elijah Pask successor is also named, someone with the surname of Hogg.

William Pannal died on the 6th February, 1900 and he left his estate including the Shant to his wife Harriet Eliza. Later on that year and just three days after the country had gone mad over the relief of Mafeking, Harriet sold the property to Robert Farrants of Haverhill, carrier, for £23. Six years after this, Robert sells it to his wife for £20. She is described as a licence victualler but still has to agree not to sell intoxicating liquor on or off the premises. Why she brought the place is not clear, but when she died as a widow on 12th January 1921 she is living there with a Mrs. Choat. She died intestate and the property, now known as "The Bungalow" passed to a Henry Victor Southgate, a coachman living in a mews off the Marlehone Road in London. He presumably was next of kin. Within twelve months he had sold the property to another Farrants, Harry Willie a hotel keeper of Haverhill, for £150. This deed mentioned a Wright who must have been living there when the Pannals owned it. Harry Willie Farrants was brother to Mrs. Choat who was living with Emma Pannal when she died in 1925. Harry Willie gave The Bungalow to his sister who is described as wife of Joseph Choat of Horseheath, gardener.

The next deed is dated 17th April 1938. Sarah Elizabeth Choat is now a widow and appears to have taken a likening to John James Arber of Station Road, Haverhill, motor driver. This deed settled the property on him under certain conditions. He is not to sell the property till after her death and any income derived from the property belongs to Mrs. Choat till her death. The property was also to be kept in good repair and insured against loss by fire. She died in March 1940 and in 1942 Arber sold the property to a gentleman, Charles Harold Whittock of New House Farm, Helions Bumpstead for £550.

Whittock certainly lived at The Bungalow but when he sold it to Major George Benjamin Burles he is described as living at Old Hall, Newnham College, Cambridge. Major Burles, who was late of the Burma Army, was living at The Bungalow at the time of the sale in 1946 and is still living there (1986).

It is nice to think that this building which was hurriedly put up to serve the thirst of the navies who were building the railway, not only survived them but the railway as well. The line was closed in the 1960's and even the cutting which these navies so dilligently dug is no more having been filled in.

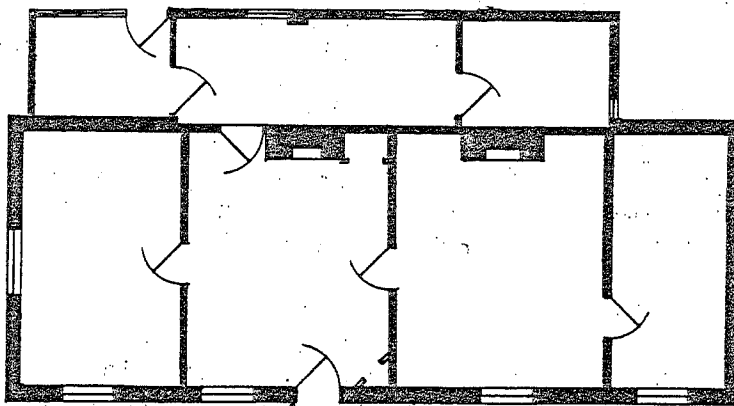
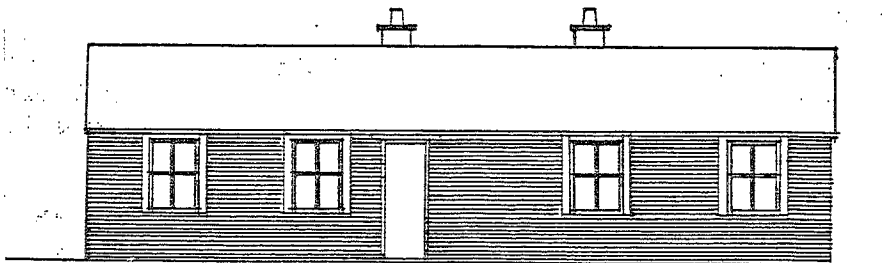
PATRICK CROUCH AND JANE HARWOOD

(We would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Burles for allowing us sight of their deeds, making plans of the house, also for their hospitality).

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THE SHANT



ELEVATION AND PLAN

The original building appeared to consist of the front four rooms. At a later date the timber framed structure was given a skin of brickwork and the middle part at the back with a lean-to roof was added on.

## Bury and Norwich Post

July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1883

Kedington Brewery Estate for sale. 2 maltings-19 fully licenced Inns and Beerhouses. On the instructions of the executors of the late John Price. At the Bell Hotel, Haverhill, on the 13th July 1883.

Kedington brewery-White Horse, Kedington-Barnardiston Arms, Kedington- Wheelrs Arms, Steeple Bumstead-The Plough, Hemstead-One Bell, Tilbury- Kicking Donkey, Ovington-Wagon and Horses, Clare-The Lion, Clare-White Hart, Chilton-Thatchers Arms, Hundon-Crown, Denston-Three Tuns, Bradley-Red Lion, Kirtling-Marquis of Granby, Woodditton-Crown, Great Bradley-The " Shant" beerhouse, Horseheath-Beerhouse at Withersfield-Butchers Arms, Castle Hedingham.

July 17<sup>th</sup> 1883.

CEN. 7-7-1989

### HISTORIC BUNGALOW IS TO BE DEMOLISHED

## Time is up for historic building

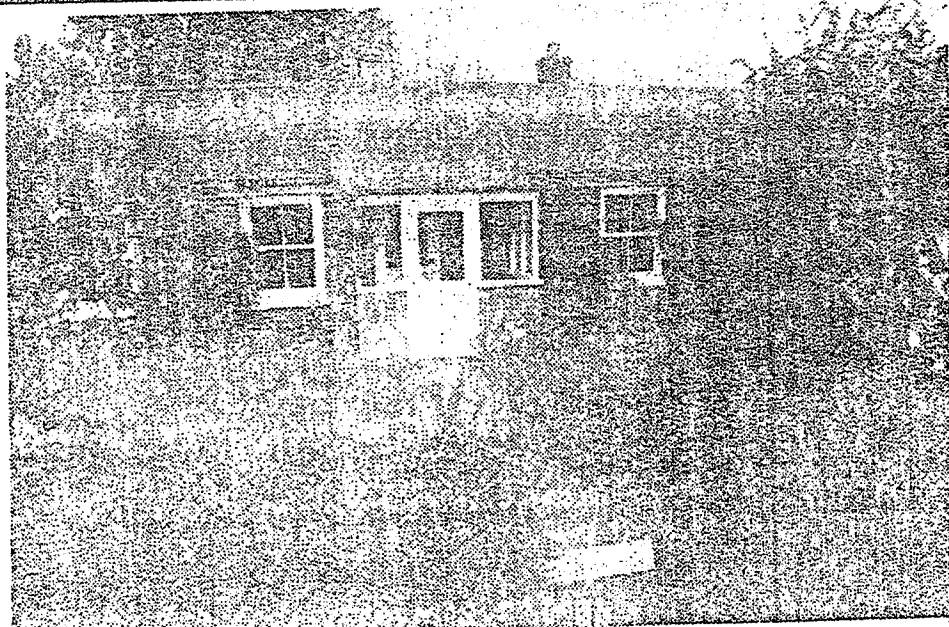
A BEERHOUSE in Horseheath, believed to be the only one of its kind in the area, is to be demolished.

The red brick bungalow was built in the 1860s to provide navvies with refreshments while working on the Haverhill-Cambridge railway line.

### Subsiding

South Cambridgeshire Planning Committee approved an application to replace it with a four-bedroom bungalow and double garage, despite objections.

The building, known as "The Shant" on Horseheath Green, is dilapidated and subsiding, members were told in a report. It was



The Shant at Horseheath Green

occupied until 1986.

The plan was submitted by Mr John Cooper, of Bryony Close, Haverhill.

Objections were raised by Councillor John Inapey who wanted the building restored if possible.

"We have a conservation committee lashing out grants left, right and centre for this kind of thing and if we can save this, we ought to do so."

Horseheath Parish Council wrote objecting to the building's demolition.

"It is possibly unique in this area as few shants, as they are known, exist, certainly as unchanged as this one which is a charming small-scale Victorian building worth preserving in its own right," it said.

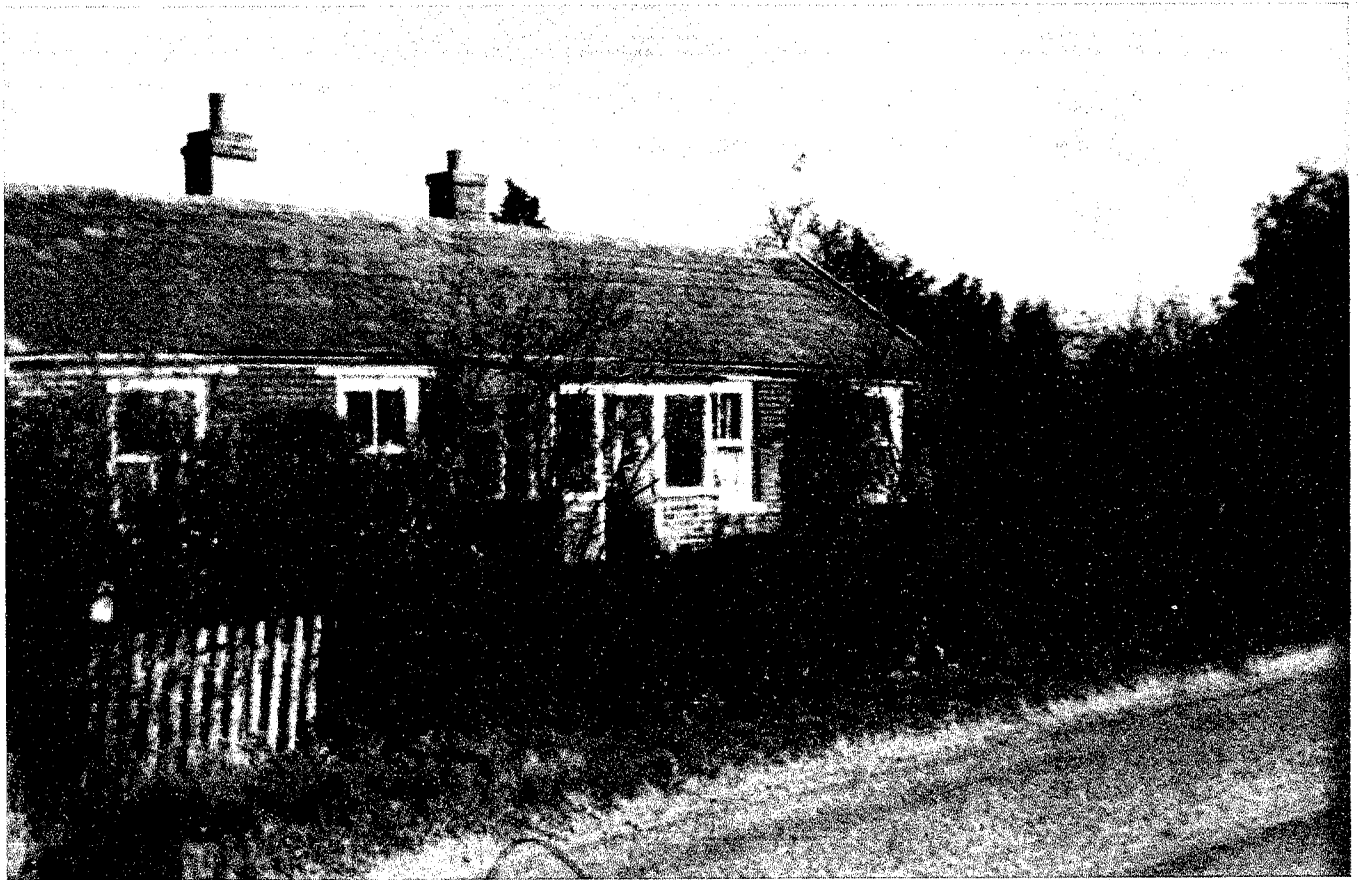
"So many small buildings have disappeared or have

been swallowed up. This certainly forms part of the heritage of our village but few people know its history."

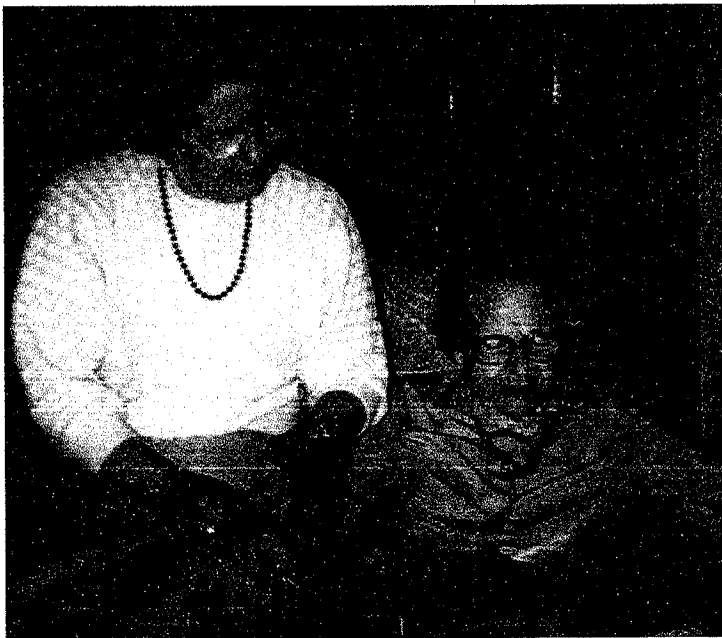
The district council's conservation officer described the beerhouse as "a pleasant unobtrusive building, but of limited interest".

He said it was suffering from subsidence and would have to be rebuilt.

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**1980's – 'The Bungalow'** (formerly The Shant) on the left before the bridge on the road to Mill Green. It was built by the Great Eastern Railway as a beerhouse for workers building the railway in the 1860's. In 1946 it was bought by Major George Burles and his wife Doris (on the right below with Peggy Notley) who lived there until the late 1980's when it made way for a new bungalow.



SHOCKING DISCOVERY IN EAST CAMBS.

At half past eight one Friday morning in July, 1891, Mr. George Hardy Hills who was a visitor at Carbonell's Farm, Cardinals Green, Horseheath, was walking past the horse pond which was situated on the farm premises, when he noticed "a coarse bundle" floating on the water. As he was curious to know what this bundle contained he called a farm labourer and the bundle was recovered. When the string was cut, both men were horrified to find inside the body of a newly born child in "an advanced state of decomposition" together with a brick. The body was removed to an outbuilding and the County Coroner and the local Superintendent of Police were informed of the awful discovery.

The inquest was held before the County Coroner (Mr. C. W. Palmer) at the farm on the following Monday afternoon with Superintendent Dyson present. "Much excitement was occasioned in the village and a large crowd of persons assembled outside the farm".

Mr. Hills told how he had noticed the bundle floating on the water and had called John Hall, a farm labourer, to help him recover it, which he did with the aid of a manure hook. "He did not think that Hall could cause any injury to the body by the way he pulled it out. He put the fork underneath the string and pulled the bundle out".

John Hall supported Mr. Hills' evidence. He said he was sure that the tines of the fork had not penetrated the body and that he had got the bundle out at the first try.

Dr. Herbert John Hargraves of Haverhill then gave the results of the post mortem which he had carried out on the deceased child. There was a jagged wound at the root of the neck but no fractures of any bones of the skull. Externally there were marks of putrefaction. According to the standard tests carried out he had come to the conclusion that respiration had taken place. "He had no doubt whatever that the child had lived".

He was unable to give an opinion as to whether death was brought about by violence or whether the wounds were caused before or after death or by the brick in the bag. "I can give no conjecture as to the cause of death except by saying it was not caused by drowning". When pressed by the Coroner as to whether the child was deprived of life through violence, the doctor told him that he did not feel justified in giving an opinion from observations he had made.

He concluded by saying he could conceive no other cause of death but by violence and not by drowning. The body had been in the water for two or three weeks.

The Coroner stated that "it was a very serious case and one that ought to have every consideration". He adjourned the inquiry for one week.

When the inquest was resumed a week later, a young woman named Elizabeth Reader of Shudy Camps was called into the room before any evidence was taken. She was informed that she could remain in the room throughout the hearing, to which she agreed.

The first witness called was Sarah Hall, wife of John Hall, who said she lived in a cottage next door to Elizabeth Reader, who was a single woman. She believed Reader to have been recently confined. Mary Anne Belsham "an aged woman" who lived two doors from Reader gave evidence of a similar nature. The inquest was further adjourned to the Tuesday following and in the meantime two witnesses were to be summoned, one believed to be in Yorkshire, the other "at a great distance from the inquiry".

Elizabeth Reader was again present at the third and final inquest to which Ellen Free, wife of Jabez Free, labourer, of Woodleaford, Yorkshire, was the first witness called. She stated that in May she had been living with her mother at Shudy Camps and had noticed a change in Reader's appearance.

Superintendent Edward Dyson, who had charge of the case, then gave evidence in which he told how, on Monday 29th of June he went to Elizabeth Reader's house. After cautioning her he told her he had reason to believe that she had lately given birth to a child. Reader denied that she had had any other child since her first child, a little boy of about three years old which she pointed out to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent then proceeded to search the downstairs rooms and the garden at the back of the house where he found a brick which he found "to correspond" in size and shape with the one found in the bag with the body of the child". It was not an ordinary brick. He could find no others of this sort in the district in which he had been looking. After the first inquest had been adjourned Reader made a statement which the Superintendent had taken down in writing. She confirmed after reading it over that it was correct and signed it in the presence of P.C. Johnson.

In her statement Reader admitted that the child was hers. She did not know whether it ever lived. She kept it in a basket a week and then put it in a bag with a brick she took out of the garden. She then went to the pond at the back of Mr. Willing's farm and threw it in.

After hearing the evidence of P.C. Johnson who had first been summoned to the farm following the discovery of the body, the Coroner, addressing the Jury, observed that "the serious part of their duty came in". If the Jury believed the evidence of the doctor, he did not see how they could possibly come to any other conclusion than that the child's life was taken by some person. But the doctor had stated that he could not conceive how the child could have been deprived of life except by violence. Doctor Hargraves then remarked that he "distinctly declined to give an opinion as to the cause of death". He had no doubt "legal violence had been used" but he was not prepared



to say that the child was deprived of life by any act of commission". In the absence of any definite opinion from the doctor the Coroner asked him whether there was some wrong done to the child to deprive it of life and the doctor agreed with this.

After a consultation which lasted about fifteen minutes, the Jury returned a verdict of "Wilful Murder" against Elizabeth Reader and she was committed to take her trial at the Assizes.

She was indicted at the Cambridge Assizes before Mr. Justice Hawkins with the murder of her female child at Shudy Camps. There was a second indictment of manslaughter and a third of concealment. The prisoner "who presented a much more haggard appearance" than before pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Mr. Rawlinson, who opened the case, said that before a verdict of murder could be brought in they would have to be satisfied not only that the child had lived but that an act of the prisoner had caused the child's death. There had been considerable difficulty in establishing that and therefore on the charge of murder the evidence was not very strong. On the second charge of manslaughter, they would first have to be satisfied that the child had lived and through the neglect of the woman the child had died. The third charge of concealment had been almost proved by the prisoner's own admission.

The witnesses examined were the same as called before the Coroner at the inquiry. After they had been examined the charges of murder and manslaughter were withdrawn and the only charge was one of concealment of birth and on that point, whether the child had lived or not was quite immaterial. This charge was disproved after it was stated that there had been no attempt to conceal the child from the prisoner's neighbour, Mrs. Hall, who was often in the house. Reader was a "woman in very poor circumstances" and could not afford to pay burial expenses, but there had been no attempt to conceal.

The Jury, "after a short deliberation" returned a verdict of "Not Guilty" on each charge and the prisoner was accordingly "set at liberty".

#### Jane Harwood

MARTHA TURPING, was buried July 31st, 1803. Aged 75 years.  
N.B. This poor woman was walking along the road, was driven over by the London stage coach and died on the spot - the Coroners inquest sate upon the body - and the verdict of the Jury was accidental death.

ANN BIGMORE daugr. of Samuel Bigmore and Mary was buried September the 9th, 1803 - Aged 1 year and 4 months.  
N.B. This child was playing on the road and a waggon ran violently over her and occasion'd instant death. Verdict of the Coroner's Inquest: Accidental death.

WILLIAM BLEVEN Son of a private in the 5th Regt. of Dragoon Guards killed July 25th. in the street of Haverhill by the wheel of a baggage waggon pafsing over his body. Verdict of Coroner: Accidental death. 1818.

(From the Burial Registers of Haverhill)